



THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

Wild Flower Hotline

Call 818-768-1802 ext 7 | Weekly Updates March–May

Theodore Payne Foundation's Wild Flower Hotline is made possible by [donations](#), and [memberships](#). Please support the Hotline today! The Theodore Payne Wild Flower Hotline offers free weekly online and recorded updates on the best locations for viewing spring wild flowers in Southern and Central California. All locations are on easily accessible public lands and range from urban to wild, distant to right here in L.A.

April 4, 2025

ENJOY RESPONSIBLY!

While California's blooms are a beautiful and awe-inspiring natural phenomenon, they are also delicate and are easily damaged by human activity, so it is important to enjoy them responsibly and minimize the impact on fragile ecosystems.

Please always...

- ✿ Stay on designated trails.
- ✿ Stay out of burn areas.
- ✿ Share the trails; be respectful of others.
- ✿ Do not collect or step on wildflowers.
- ✿ Remember your experiences through photos and leave no trace.
- ✿ Visit on weekdays and/or off-peak hours, if possible.

Harbingers of Spring are everywhere! Get out and enjoy gardens and native wildlands for April's spring festivals occurring throughout Southern California this month. Happy Spring.

The annual Open House events are scheduled at [Prisk Native Garden](#) for the next two Sundays, April 6 and April 13 from 1–4 pm. Please attend one of the Sunday dates or both! Visitors will learn about the 30-year-old, 7500 sq. foot "template" Garden on a school campus in Long Beach that has a mission to engage children in nature's joyful and restorative experiences that complement formal classroom education. Overnight seemingly, because of mild warm temperatures following mid-March rain, there are colorful blossoms everywhere, with more coming each week. In addition to the ubiquitous California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), Arroyo lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*) and tidy tips (*Layia platyglossa*), we have five-spot (*Nemophila maculata*), mounds of baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), Mojave bluebells (*Phacelia campanularia*), and various fragrant sages (*Salvia* spp.). Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorr*) in particular, brings home the wild aroma of the high desert in spring bloom. Many members of the cactus family are beginning to pop in our Desert Wash section. The claret cup cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*) and Engelmann's hedgehog (*Echinocereus engelmannii*) are beaming with blossoms! Elsewhere, look for meadow foam (*Limnanthes douglasii*) in the shadier, moister areas. Shrubs in all the garden habitats have been flowering prolifically including Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*) showing off their large yellow flowers set upon elegant gray-green foliage, or hot pink flowers of fairy duster beaconing passing hummingbirds. This is just a tiny taste of the Garden's color palette.

Next week on Sunday April 13, these bountiful blooms and hopefully many more will be available for viewing as well.



Claret cup cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus*), Island bush poppy (*Dendromecon harfordii*), Dorr's sage (*Salvia dorrii*), baby blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*). Photos by Mike Letteriello.

Coastal California

A great place to enjoy a recreational spring fling is [Pinnacles National Park](#). Signs of spring are everywhere. The geography of the park provides raptors with ideal nesting sites, both on the inaccessible cliffs, craggy rock formations and on the oaks and pines along the riparian corridors. Although some of the trails are closed during peak nesting season (check park website), you may spot prairie falcons, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, and American kestrels to name a few. Entering the park at the Eastern portal, you can't help but notice the large perennial silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*) peppering the landscape. Depending on the trail you choose, and there are many, early spring flowers can be seen throughout the park. The blue purple blue witch (*Solanum umbelliferum*) is common in chaparral. Look there too for Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*) growing among the grasses and under chaparral shrubs. The deep shade cast by oaks and other riparian trees give refuge to the shade loving California saxifrage (*Micranthes californica*), purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*), small flower woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*) and fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*). All of them like to hang out in shady areas with the sunlight filtering through tree canopies. Find them now along the Bench Trail or occupying meadows like those along the Rim Trail. Also preferring grassy open areas but in sunnier locations are baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) and cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*). It's impossible to choose the "cutest" flower in California but cream cups seen along the North Wilderness Trail, would be a contender. Each creamy petal grades to a buttery yellow at the center where you find a pompom of filaments and stamens.



Silver bush lupines (*Lupinus albifrons*), cream cups (*Platystemon californicus*), small flower woodland star (*Lithophragma parviflorum*), Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*). Photos by Sara Gorski, Sadie Albert, Shelly Seymour.

The Carrizo Plain

The [Carrizo Plain](#) got less than 2 inches of rain a couple of weeks ago and turned the landscape a little greener [for St. Patrick's Day weekend!], but wildflowers are still scarce, so the "green" may be the emergence of exotic grasses only. Along Highway 58 heading east from San Luis Obispo, wildflowers were visible along the road, but they were small and widely scattered. Shell Creek, which often provides a spectacular display, showed only a few stands of goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) Entering Carrizo Plain at the northwest corner, there is one area with a small display of phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) in a plowed field and goldfields again along Soda Lake Road. The spectacular show of hillside daisies (*Monolopia lanceolata*) is conspicuous by their absence. There is still a small chance for the shrubs and late geophytes to put on a modest show, but overall, this year is shaping up to be a disappointment for expanses of colorful wildflowers. Still, grand vistas of rolling hills and open spaces formed by California's iconic geologic history, no matter what the color, is worth visiting.



A limited area of phacelia (*Phacelia ciliata*) in California Valley near Highway 58. Photo by Neil Havlik.

Southern Sierra Foothills

The foothills of the Three Rivers region and the Kaweah River basin is experiencing an excellent wildflower season! Driving around [Kaweah Lake](#) on Sierra Highway (198) the cool moist spring is keeping the early blooming fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia eastwoodiae*) and popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*) populating the hillsides and spring flowering madia (*Madia* sp.) is just beginning to bloom. While always common on these blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) dominated hillsides, the fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*) is having a banner year too. Vast patches of their pale blue flowers are popping up all over. Accompanying them are pockets of purple pagodas (*Collinsia heterophylla*) just coming into bloom. Flowering caterpillar phacelia (*Phacelia cicutaria*) is also commonly seen here. As you explore the normally barren 'bathtub ring' region of the lake, deep blue patches of what appears to be lupines (*Lupinus* sp.) are making quite a colorful sight. On the sunnier slopes, foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) are in full flower and often blooming with tall spikes of spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*) painting an impressionistic yellow-gold and blue landscape. To accent this palette of color, the redbuds should still be making a big pink splash for a couple more weeks. Getting out of the car and onto the trails, you will encounter this bountiful wildflower experience close-up. Coming into focus on the closer look will be the abundant blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*) and their distant geophytic cousins, pretty faces (*Triteleia ixioides*) unveiling their soft yellow star-shaped flowers. Baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) are still flowering here and there while their diminutive cousins, Eastwood's nemophila (*Nemophila pulchella*) are abundant, often blooming in great patches with the bright white popcorn flowers or miniature lupines (*Lupinus bicolor*) also blooming in great profusion. Recently "bursting" onto the scene is foothill sunburst (*Pseudobahia heermannii*), woodland star (*Lithophragma heterophyllum*), both purple and white variants of owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), butter n' eggs (*Triphysaria eriantha*) and rock bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus calycinus*). Virgin's bower (*Clematis* sp.) is vining its way up into the branches of trees and shrubs everywhere.





Fiesta flower (*Pholistoma auritum*), owl's clover (*Castilleja exserta*), foothill poppies (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*) with spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*), Virgin's bower (*Clematis* sp.). Photos by Michael Wall.

High Desert

The past couple of rain events at the [Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve](#) dropped less than 1 inch of rain, not enough to significantly improve poppy germination rates. The hardy poppy plants that have grown are small and sparsely scattered throughout the park. The best trail to hike for flowers is the ADA trail that connects the north and south loop of the Poppy Trail. Along the way, grape soda lupine (*Lupinus excubitus*) is blooming and wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpa*) is pushing up in places. There are scattered fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia* sp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia* sp.) and some miniature lupine (*Lupinus* sp.) growing slowly as well. As with Carrizo Plain, don't expect any superbloom here at AVSPR either, but if you enjoy visiting rare places where you can take in grand panoramas, hike or just meditate on nature, the Poppy Reserve is right for you. Check out the [Trail map](#). There is possibility of more flowers still. Keep tabs on the scene via the Park's PoppyCam live feed [here](#).

San Gabriel Mountain and Foothill Region

The usual riotous wildflower bloom at [Placerita Canyon](#) Nature Center has not appeared yet this year. However, the hills within and around the park are shrouded in places with shades of white and blue blossoms of hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus* var. *oliganthus*). The fragrance in the air is delightful.



Hoary ceanothus (*Ceanothus crassifolius*) and hairy ceanothus (*Ceanothus oliganthus* var. *oliganthus*) at Placerita Canyon.

Photos by RuthAnne Murthy

Two new annuals have joined the California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) this week at the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#). The two newcomers, fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*) and California sun cups (*Camissoniopsis bistorta*) have popped up in the Demonstration Garden, the Nursery and on Wildflower Hill. Two amazing perennials also made their debut this week—the electric blue and pink showy penstemon (*Penstemon spectabilis*) and the dramatic and rare Peninsular beargrass (*Nolina cismontana*). Cheery yellow blossoms of bush sunflower (*Encelia californica*), canyon sunflower (*Venegasia carpesioides*) and Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*) are brightening up pathways everywhere. Trekking up Wildflower Hill adjacent to the sales yard, you will encounter fragrant Cedros Island verbena (*Verbena lilacina*) and purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*)—both sport lovey lavender flowers and are very fragrant and can also be purchased at the TPF nursery!

San Diego County

Even if you do not have any reason to go to San Diego via the Inland route, I-15, you probably should find one. The drive through the Fallbrook to Escondido corridor along I-15 is a spectacular treat. The woolly leaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus tomentosus*) is in bloom and has turned the hills adjacent to the freeway a stunning blue for only a couple of weeks. One destination, northeast of Escondido is [Daley Ranch](#). Numerous trails will have you botanizing and birding through sumptuous green grasslands, chaparral and oak woodlands.

The lushness of the landscape looks like it would in a normal rain year! The most impressive plants include abundant milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*) and a number of sugar bushes (*Rhus ovata*) all in good bloom along the Rock Ridge Trail. There are lots of happy ferns (7 species!). One of the fern species, the California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*) is only found in San Diego County. Another is the California maiden hair (*Adiantum jordanii*) which grows in shaded hillsides in chaparral areas.



California adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum californicum*), California maiden hair (*Adiantum jordanii*), Milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*). Photos by Fred Melgert and Tom Chester.

Urban Los Angeles Region

The wildflower show is taking off at Elizabeth Learning Center as many new blooms make their appearance! Their Desert Garden has Fremont barberry (*Berberis fremontii*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert lavender (*Condea emoryi*), apricot mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*), brittle bush (*Encelia farinosa*), and climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*). The Vernal Pools

Habitat Garden delights with San Diego ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), woolly marbles (*Psilocarphus brevissimus*), Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), "chocolate chip" stemmed ceanothus (*Ceanothus verrucosus*), school bells (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), cliff spurge (*Euphorbia misera*), and Del Mar manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *crassifolia*). Additional species in their Chaparral Garden include matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Orcutt's hazardia (*Hazardia orcuttii*), Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*), Island barberry (*Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis*), pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), rooreh (*Claytonia perfoliata*), Santa Rosa Island sage (*Salvia brandegeei*), red-skinned onion (*Allium haematochiton*), sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), Santa Cruz Island buckwheat (*Eriogonum arborescens*), and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).

Elizabeth Learning Center is located off Elizabeth Street between Atlantic and Wilcox Avenues in Cudahy. Most gardens can be seen from the sidewalk in front of the school without having to check in at the Main Office. For a more immersive visit, contact George Nanoski, the Habitat Gardens coordinator via email: gtn5586@lausd.net. His conference period is 2:00pm – 3:30 on Mondays and Thursdays. Or a visit can be arranged after 3:30 when school is out.



Golden spined cereus (*Bergerocactus emoryi*), climbing milkweed (*Funastrum cynanchoides* var. *hartwegii*), matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Photos by George Nanoski.

That's it for this week. Look for our next report on Friday, April 11th and check back each week for the most up-to-date information on Southern California wildflower regions to visit!

Wild Flower & Native Plant Events Across SoCal

Theodore Payne Foundation

🌸 Native Plant Garden Tour | April 5 & 6 | 10 AM – 5 PM

Taking place April 5th and 6th, 2025, the Native Plant Garden Tour is a two-day, self-guided tour across Greater Los Angeles. Since 2003, more than 700 public and private landscapes have participated in the Native Plant Garden Tour. Ranging from coastal container gardens to experimental urban homesteads, each unique design offers beauty and critical habitat for wildlife. The gardens on this tour contain at least 50 percent native plants. [Get tickets & gear here!](#)

Prisk Native Garden

🌸 Annual Open House | April 6 and April 13 | 1–4 PM

Admission free, donations gladly accepted. The Garden is around the corner from Prisk Elementary School, at 2375 Fanwood Ave. Long Beach, 90814. The Garden gate is located under a large banner (“Prisk Native Garden”) on Los Arcos St. near the intersection of San Vicente St. For more info: letteriello@charter.net

The Wildlands Conservancy: Whitewater Preserve

🌸 Colors of Spring: Guided Hike | April 6 | 9 AM

Moderate 3.8 mile hike of the Canyon View Loop. Whitewater Preserve. Info, map, sign-up [here](#)

The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

🌸 ReWild Ojai Garden Tour | April 26 | 9 AM – 3 PM

Annual garden tour in the Ojai Valley with home gardens that feature California native plants. More information [here](#).